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ALFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S
ANNUAL REPORT

For 1947

July, 1948

ALFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

*Report of the Medical Officer of Health
for the Year 1947*

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you the Annual Report for the year ending Dec. 31st, 1947, on the health and sanitary conditions of the Alford Urban District.

In February, 1947, I was appointed Medical Officer of Health to your Council in succession to Dr. G. A. Bosson, who had retired from that office in June the previous year, there being a period of nearly eight months during which the post was vacant.

I am pleased to be able to report that once again the general health in Alford has been good throughout the year; there has been no epidemic of infectious disease and the improvement in the sanitary conditions of the town has continued.

The first three months of 1947 was a period of exceptionally severe weather and for many weeks several of the roads out of Alford were blocked with deep snow. This was followed by a particularly fine, warm and dry spring, summer and autumn, to the benefit of the health of the people. Owing to economic conditions the Government found it impossible to relax in any way the severe rationing of food stuffs to which we have all become accustomed; and in November it was found necessary also to add potatoes to the list of rationed goods—three lbs. per head per week. This was the first time that it had been necessary to curtail potatoes and their loss was severely felt by many people, there being nothing to take their place. Potatoes are also our main source of supply of Vitamin C.

Vital Statistics.

The area of the district is 1,138 Acres.

The population of the town is estimated at 2,167.

The Rateable Value is £10,325 and the value of a penny rate is £40 11s. 2d.

The number of inhabited houses is 783.

The Births numbered 37—21 male and 16 female. This represents a birthrate of 17 per thousand of the population. The figure for the whole of England and Wales was a very high one—20.5. The figure of 37 includes 4 illegitimate births.

The Deaths numbered 39—26 male and 13 female. This represents a deathrate per thousand of the population of 17.1 compared to 12.0 for the whole country. The Alford figure appears in comparison a high one, but in a small place such as this the numbers are insufficient to make a true comparison. In 1945 the deathrate in Alford was 10.6 and in 1946 it was 16.1.

Of the 39 deaths: 6 were due to Cancer, 7 to Cerebral Haemorrhage, 12 to diseases of the circulatory system, 3 to kidney diseases, 3 to Tuberculosis and 2 to other diseases of the lungs. There were no deaths due to violence and only one to an infant under one year of age.

General Provision of Health Services.

Laboratory examinations are carried out at the Public Laboratory Service at Lincoln. Water analyses by Messrs. W. W. Taylor, of Nottingham.

Midwifery and Nursing Services. The Lindsey County Council is the local Supervising Authority under the Midwives' Act for the whole of Lindsey.

Hospital and Nursing services are unchanged.

Infectious diseases if requiring hospital treatment are sent to Osgodby or Scartho Isolation Hospitals, but only (except in the case of Smallpox) by the courtesy of these Hospital Boards. If, as happened in the epidemic of Infantile Paralysis in 1947, they are short of beds, they close theirs to the Alford District as we have no right of admission of cases. This is a most unsatisfactory state of affairs. I hope that when, in July, 1948, all Hospitals are taken over by the Ministry of Health under the National Health Act, that more satisfactory arrangements for Infectious Diseases will be made for this District.

Scabies. I have had no cases reported to me during the year.

Venereal Diseases. A clinic for the treatment of these ailments is in operation at Skegness. Treatment is free and strictly confidential. No cases were reported to me during 1947.

Diphtheria Immunisation. During the year the immunisation of 45 children was reported—12 under 5 years of age and 33 of school age. There are still a considerable number of children not protected against Diphtheria in Alford, and I hope that medical men, nurses and school teachers will continue to do all in their power to impress upon parents the importance of this protection which is given free of charge and, if so wished, by the children's own doctor.

Tuberculosis. 5 cases were notified in 1947. 4 being of the Pulmonary type. This is an unusually high figure; there

was only one case in 1946. There were three deaths from this cause.

There were no cases of Puerperal Fever and no deaths attributable to maternity cause.

Prevalence of Disease. The general health of the town was good. Except for Tuberculosis the only notified cases of infectious disease were 4 children with measles. During the summer and autumn the country experienced a very serious epidemic of Infantile Paralysis; two cases were under suspicion in Alford, but both, fortunately, proved to be something less serious.

Water. The town's water supply continues to be excellent in quality and quantity. Regular analyses were taken throughout the year. During 1947, extension of the water main to Farlesthorne Road was completed, and 6 houses, 3 small holdings and 1 farm supplied. Altogether 48 premises were connected to the main supply. Arrangements were put in hand, also, for extensions to Commercial Road, Christopher Road and part of Chauntry Road.

Sewerage. The sewage works have proved efficient, and since the sludge from the screens has been removed fortnightly there have been no complaints of offensive smells. In the course of the year 30 fresh premises have been put on to the sewerage system; there are, however, still 215 pan closets and 45 vaults in Alford. I feel strongly that now the water mains and sewerage will very shortly be carried to all parts of the town, a great effort should be made to put all houses on to the water carriage system and put an end to out-of-date and insanitary conditions. There would be some expense at first, but, when completed, the two men with horse and cart employed in the removal of nightsoil would no longer be required for that purpose, nor the four men who are engaged at regular intervals in cleaning and excavating the sludge from the bays at the nightsoil disposal works.

Housing. 12 Council houses and 4 privately-built houses were completed during the year, and at the end of December 22 Council and 2 private houses were in course of erection.

Cowsheds. The 5 registered cowsheds in the district were inspected and found satisfactory. There were no new registrations during the year.

Squatters. There were 12 huts in the station camp occupied by squatters. All have been supplied with water, sewerage and electricity, and the families are happy and contented.

I have the honour to be, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,

C. S. E. WRIGHT,

Medical Officer of Health.